

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LYFTE PROGRAM

FORMATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

PREPARED FOR:

University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research
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RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH GOAL & OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH GOAL

To understand the landscape of programs and utilization of resources for pregnant and parenting teens and young adults in Kansas, in order to inform messaging strategies to promote program engagement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Assess utilization of programs, current perceptions of access, and resource needs of pregnant and parenting teens and young adults

Examine barriers that prevent program engagement and enrollment in services for pregnant and parenting teens and young adults

Identify preferred social media platforms and channels, in order to evaluate possible avenues for messaging

Evaluate pre-existing materials and messaging to identify the style, tone, and messaging approaches that will resonate with pregnant and parenting teens and young adults

THE CURRENT STUDY

METHOD



COMPONENTS

FOCUS GROUPS

Dates: February, 2019

Number of Focus Groups: 5

Length: 2 hours

Locations: Wichita, Topeka

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Dates: February, 2019

Number of Interviews: 6

Length: 90 minutes

Locations: Rural areas of Kansas

QUANTITATIVE INSTRUMENTS:

- Check-In Survey
- Personal Values Survey
- Ad Test Survey

QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Personal Values
- Social Media Usage and Preferences
- Program Utilization and Access
- Perceptions of Programs and Barriers to Use
- Family Structure and Social Support
- Reactions to Creative Materials

RECRUITMENT & SCREENING

RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment was conducted by Tallgrass Market Research, The Research Partnership, and Rescue Staff
- Recruitment efforts included traditional panel outreach, community based organization outreach, and social media recruitment
- A phone screener script and an online screener survey were used to determine eligibility

SCREENER SURVEY

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Age | • Education |
| • Gender | • Race/Ethnicity |
| • Program Awareness and Enrollment | • Pregnant/Parent Status |
| • Number and Age of Children | • Internet and Computer Access |



SCREENING CRITERIA

- Participants completed a screener survey over the phone or online, and the qualification criteria below was used to determine eligibility:
- **Age:** Participants qualified if they were between 13 and 24 years old
- **Gender:** Participants qualified if they were female
- **Pregnant/Parent Status:** Participants qualified if they were currently pregnant or a parent of one or more children
- **Internet and Computer Access (interview participants only):** Participants qualified for interviews if they had reliable internet and computer access to view research materials

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Across focus groups and interviews, a variety of research activities were implemented with the goal of understanding the landscape of programs and utilization of resources by pregnant and parenting teens in Kansas, and to assess reactions to pre-existing campaign materials. The table below provides a summary of activities.

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
Check-In Survey	This survey included a variety of measures to assess social media usage, program awareness and engagement, knowledge of services, topics of interest, and relationship measures. Participants also completed the I-Base Survey to gather information about peer crowd identification.
Personal Values Survey & Discussion	This survey included a series of lifestyle values and life mottos to assess what participants deem important, in order to reveal insights that can be leveraged into effective message framing. A semi-structured discussion focused on the values and life mottos that individuals consider most and least important in their lives.
General Discussion	A semi-structured discussion to obtain insights about trends related to the target audience's utilization of resources, resource needs and barriers to engagement in programs. A variety of topics were also explored to attain a greater understanding of ways to support pregnant and parenting teens and young adults.
Pre-Existing Ad Testing	Participants were shown a total of 6 pre-existing ads, including printed LYFTE ads and video ads. Participants recorded their reactions to each ad on an Ad Test Survey and then participated in a semi-structured discussion about preferred style, tone, messaging approach, and message framing.

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

A total of **46 individuals** participated in five focus groups and six phone interviews. All participants were pregnant or parenting females from diverse regions of Kansas. Among participants, **30% were currently pregnant and 89% had at least one child.**

AGE

13 - 17 Years Old	4%
18 - 20 Years Old	20%
21 - 22 Years Old	28%
23+ Years Old	48%

EDUCATION

High School Student	22%
Some High School	4%
High School Grad	39%
Some College	28%
Associate's Degree	2%
Bachelor's Degree	5%

RACE/ETHNICITY*

White/Caucasian	61%
Black/African American	35%
Hispanic/Latina	20%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	7%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

Dating Exclusively	33%
Single	30%
Married	28%
Dating Casually	7%
Other	2%

PREGNANCY STATUS

No	70%
Yes	30%

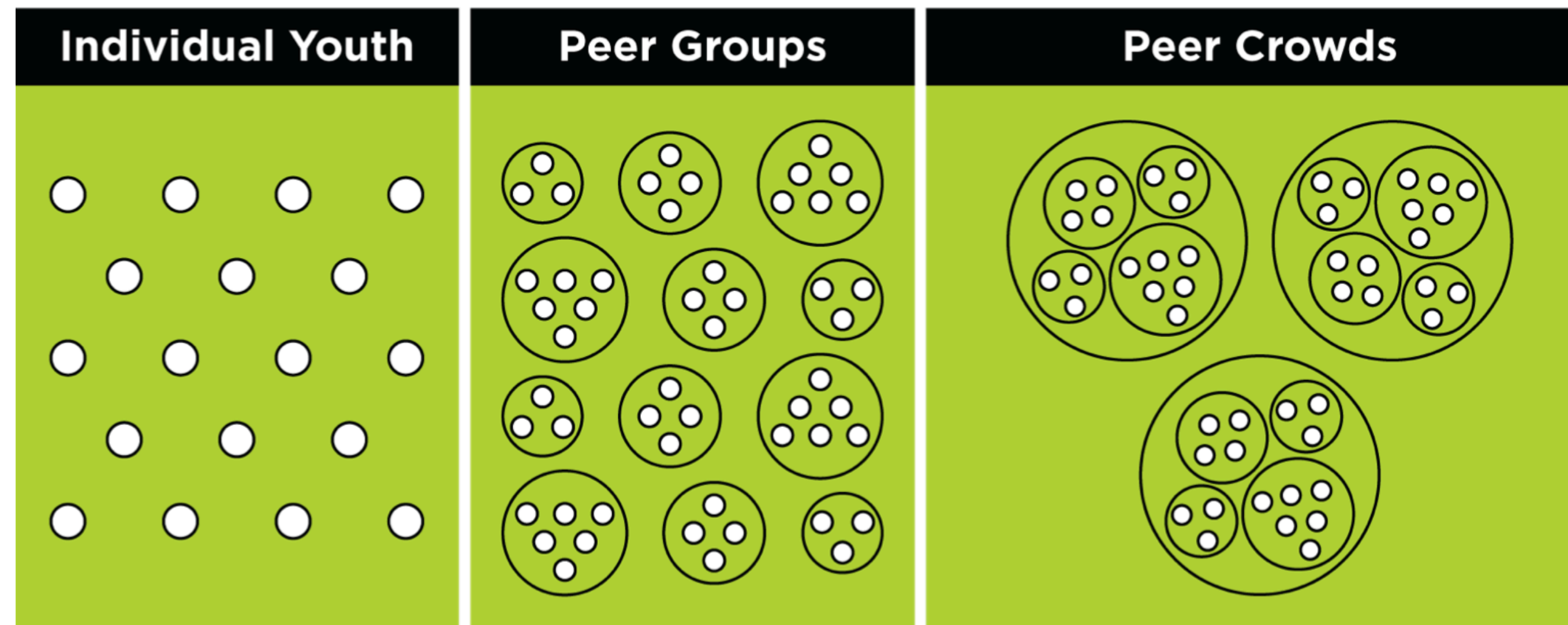
NUMBER OF CHILDREN

1 - 2	85%
3+	15%

CHILD/CHILDREN AGES*

Less than 1 Year Old	30%
1 - 3 Years Old	63%
3 - 6 Years Old	30%
6+ Years Old	7%

PEER CROWDS OVERVIEW









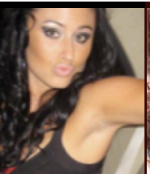


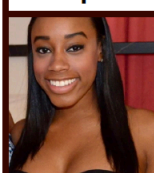

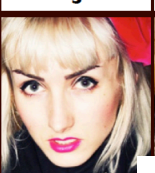

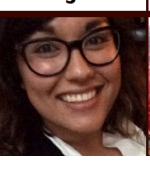
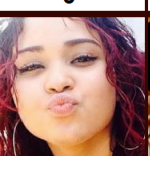


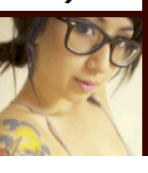

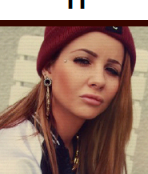
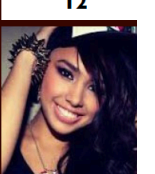

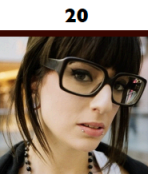

Peer crowds are macro-level subcultures with **shared beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors** that transcend geography, race, and ethnicity and have been used to conceptualize identity formation and behavior during adolescence (Moran et al., 2017; Sussman et al., 2007).

Peer crowds have been shown in academic literature to **predict health behaviors**, such as tobacco, alcohol, and drug use more effectively than demographics like race, gender, or ethnicity (Lee et al., 2013; Ling et al., 2014; Moran & Sussman, 2014).










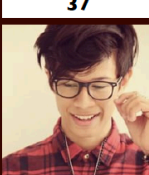
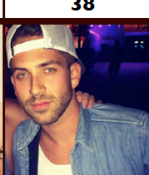

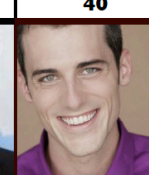
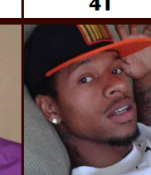

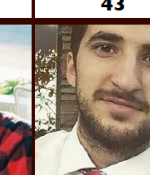



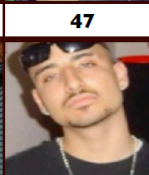

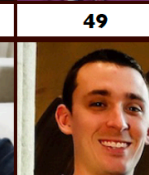

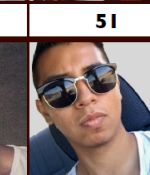

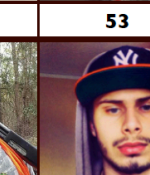
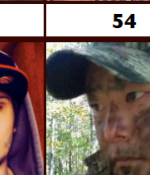
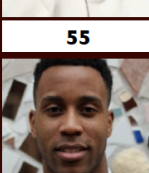

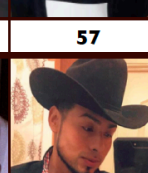
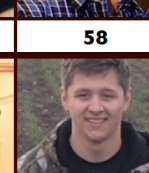
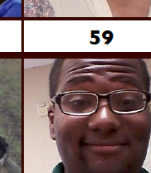


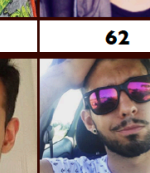
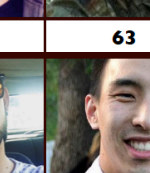
THE I-BASE™ SURVEY

Peer crowd identification was measured using Rescue's I-Base Survey™ (Jordan et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2014). Rescue's I-Base Survey measures identification with six main peer crowds: **Hip Hop, Homebody, Partier, Country, Young Professional, and Hipster.**

1) RANK THE 3 PEOPLE THAT WOULD BEST FIT IN YOUR MAIN GROUP OF FRIENDS, STARTING WITH THE BEST FIT.	Rank #1:	2) RANK THE 3 PEOPLE THAT WOULD LEAST FIT IN YOUR MAIN GROUP OF FRIENDS, STARTING WITH THE WORST FIT.	Rank #1:
	Rank #2:		Rank #2:
	Rank #3:		Rank #3:

								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
								
10	11	12						
								
19	20	21						
								
28	29	30						

3) RANK THE 3 PEOPLE THAT WOULD BEST FIT IN YOUR MAIN GROUP OF FRIENDS, STARTING WITH THE BEST FIT.	Rank #1:	4) RANK THE 3 PEOPLE THAT WOULD LEAST FIT IN YOUR MAIN GROUP OF FRIENDS, STARTING WITH THE WORST FIT.	Rank #1:
	Rank #2:		Rank #2:
	Rank #3:		Rank #3:

								
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
								
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
								
55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63
								
64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72

1. Participants selected male and female photos that best and least fit with their main group of friends.
2. Participants were assigned a score for each peer crowd (Hip Hop, Homebody, Partier, Country, Young Professional, and Hipster).
3. For analysis, Peer Crowd assignment is based on the highest endorsed peer crowd score.
 - ▶ Young Professional: 35%
 - ▶ Hip Hop: 26%
 - ▶ Homebody: 11%
 - ▶ Country: 9%
 - ▶ Partier: 7%
 - ▶ Hipster: 7%

PARTICIPANT VALUES

Participants completed a Personal Values Survey, and indicated whether they agreed or disagreed with each value statement. The most endorsed value statements and life motto centered around **taking care of one’s responsibilities**. Participants discussed prioritizing being able to provide for their children financially and spending quality time with them.

TOP STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE
I consider myself to be a responsible person.	98%
I care about living a long and healthy life.	96%
I enjoy learning and trying new things.	89%
I believe family is one of the most important things in life.	87%
When I set my mind on something, I accomplish it.	87%
TOP LIFE MOTTOS	RANKED
Take care of your responsibilities and enjoy life’s pleasures.	1st
Setting goals is an exciting part of life.	2nd
Prioritize those you care about above yourself.	3rd

“For me, it’s handling going to work every day, paying my bills on time, taking care of my son. It’s just the cycle, the everyday thing. The same repeated stuff. Doing what I have to do for myself to provide.”

“I always put my family above everything else, and I’ve made personal sacrifices for my kids, for my husband. I’m just always putting my family first.”

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

PLATFORM	I DON'T USE THIS	WEEKLY/MONTHLY	DAILY
YouTube	0%	48%	52%
Facebook	4%	9%	87%
Snapchat	9%	26%	65%
Instagram	28%	41%	31%
Pinterest	30%	41%	29%
Twitter	78%	7%	15%
LinkedIn	87%	13%	0%
Radio (AM/FM)	7%	42%	51%
Music Streaming Services	15%	39%	46%
Video Streaming Services	20%	49%	31%
TV Streaming Services	31%	33%	36%
Cable TV	47%	31%	22%

The social media platform used most was **YouTube**, followed by **Facebook**. Although everyone used YouTube, **a higher proportion of individuals used Facebook daily (87%)**. YouTube was more commonly used a few times a week. More than half of participants also used Snapchat, and a slightly lower proportion used Instagram and Pinterest. Twitter and LinkedIn were the least utilized social media platforms.

In terms of other media, **most participants listened to the radio and streamed music**. Popular music streaming services included Amazon, Apple, Pandora and Spotify. Of all participants, 51% listened to the radio on a daily basis, whereas 46% streamed music daily. A majority of participants streamed videos and TV. Generally, cable TV was less popular than other media; 47% indicated that they never watch cable TV.

SOCIAL MEDIA QUOTES

Participants discussed specific features they liked about their favorite social media platforms. **Facebook was generally preferred** and used as both a **source of entertainment and to stay in contact with family and friends**. Many participants were members of Facebook **“mommy groups”**, which they used to seek out advice and learn from other mothers. Using social media was mentioned as a way to take a mental break from everyday stressors.

“Even because you’re constantly busy with watching kids, [using social media] is kind of a break. And with the videos and stuff, it’s a laugh. And I end up getting caught in the videos, and they repost ones that are similar, so it keeps going for like an hour, and you get lost...”

“You can text one of the admins in the [Facebook] mom group, and then you can either say you want it anonymous or not, and they’ll make the post for you. And you can post on there, and other moms will help you.”

“[I ask] questions about certain doctors [in Facebook mommy groups]. I’m in the mommy group she was talking about. Certain doctors or OBGYN stuff. And they help you, like which ones are good and stuff like that.”

“I like getting on [Facebook] marketplace. You can buy a whole bunch of cheap stuff like toys or purses. I’ve bought a lot off of there for cheap.”

ONLINE PARENTING TOPICS

Participants discussed topic areas that they are currently interested in and that they actively seek online. These topic areas included **parenting education, breastfeeding, child milestones, and nutrition.**

TOPIC INTEREST

- Participants discussed wanting **parenting education**, for example, how to best discipline their child or handle teachable moments.
- Many participants often go online to ask questions related to **breastfeeding**, such as tips for how to transition out of breastfeeding.
- Participants also go online to search information about **key milestones** such as crawling and eating solid foods.
- Knowing **what to feed their baby and how to prepare baby food** was brought up as a topic area of interest.

“I guess parenting... my actions towards my child, that’s how they know what things mean in life. Things that you wouldn’t think about until you have a baby. I guess I wish there was more of that.”

“I’m trying to get tips on [how] I can stop breastfeeding.”

“I know I’m constantly searching about milestones for my kids... Like my daughter, she’s behind on crawling right now. When she’s going to start crawling and different things...”

“Like I started making my own baby food recently. It’s [online], how to make baby food.”

PROGRAM ACCESS & BARRIERS

UTILIZATION OF EXISTING RESOURCES

Many participants reported using programs and services offered in their community, and would recommend them to other people their age. The programs that participants were most familiar with included **WIC (96%)** and **KanCare (91%)**, and the majority were enrolled in **KanCare (74%)**.



	Heard of	Enrolled
WIC - Special Program for Woman, Infants, and Children	96%	65%
KANCARE - Medicaid for Kansas	91%	74%
Head Start / Early Head Start	87%	15%
SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as Kansas Food Stamps)	83%	30%
Child Care Subsidy Program	41%	7%
TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	39%	2%
Healthy Families	35%	2%
Parents as Teachers	33%	4%
HealthWave	33%	0%
Teen Pregnancy Targeted Case Management (TPTCM)	9%	0%
LYFTE - Lifting Young Families Towards Excellence	7%	0%

“Like WIC has the breastfeeding support groups. And then the hospital has the breastfeeding clinic that you can go to, which is really helpful if you’re having trouble getting your baby to latch or do different things.”

“I’m pregnant and then have two kids, so that extra bit really helps every month.”

ACCESS TO EXISTING RESOURCES

In general, participants perceive that **programs and services are available in their communities**. Most agreed that programs/services are within driving distance, and that there are programs designed for them. Participants primarily found out about existing resources through **friends and family, social media, or through staff working at a local clinic or school**.

PERCEPTIONS OF ACCESS	STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE	REFERRALS FOR PROGRAMS	
There are programs and services within driving distance to me.	78%	4%	70%	Friends
I trust the information provided by programs and services offered in my community.	74%	2%	50%	Sibling or other family member
There are programs and services in my community that are designed for me.	72%	9%	46%	Parent/guardian
			46%	Social media
			44%	Family planning/health clinic
			33%	School staff

“There is a lot, but a lot of people just give up on them. So they don’t want to finish the classes. So when you don’t finish the class, obviously you’re not going to get what you want. Just like work, you’ve got to work for what you want.”

“KanCare, I found out from my doctor, just because I think they saw we were really young and they were like, “Have you heard of KanCare? You should sign up.” And then we qualified, so that was really nice that they suggested that.”

TOPIC AREAS OF INTEREST

Participants were asked to indicate their interest in topics that they would like programs and support services to address. A large majority of participants (80%) indicated that they are interested in receiving more information about **financial planning (80%)** and **education and career development (e.g. career planning, life skills training) (78%)**.

HOW INTERESTED WOULD YOU BE IN THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES IF THEY WERE OFFERED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?	MODERATELY/ EXTREMELY INTERESTED	NOT AT ALL INTERESTED
Financial planning	80%	9%
Education & career development (e.g. career planning, life skills training)	78%	9%
Healthy living (e.g. nutrition)	78%	4%
Sexual health (e.g. birth control, STI testing and treatment)	70%	17%
Parental support & relationships (grandparents)	67%	13%
Mental health support	67%	9%
Relationships & communication	57%	15%

PREFERRED RESOURCES

Participants discussed using a number of support services and resources offered in their communities. Support services were positively perceived if they were **convenient and easy to use**. The resources offered were especially liked when they were **practical**, like baby clothes or formula at no cost. Additionally, **experiences with staff also influenced perceptions of programs**, and inclusion of a **social component in programming was appealing**.

CONVENIENT, EASY TO USE

"It was pretty easy for me to sign up for my Head Start... So they just came to my house... It didn't feel like I was being alienated for being broke. It was just real smooth."

"You call them, and you tell them you want to participate in their mom program or dad program... And they'll basically assign someone. And they come to your home..."

FREE AND PRACTICAL RESOURCES

"You tell them the weight and the size of your baby. They give you clothes. They give you formula. They give you, really, whatever you need... That's all you really have to do."

"They're really helpful with your health and stuff. So they give you things to make healthy foods and stuff. And they also give you free formula..."

PROGRAM STAFF ARE PERCEIVED AS CARING

"I loved it. The lady that I had, she kind of reminded me of my grandma... But also making sure that I had everything that I needed for my daughter. It was really helpful."

"They're really caring. They'll help you... if you need help with breastfeeding or anything, [they] try to help you out."

SOCIAL COMPONENT

"I go to a group called Parent Life... I think it's up to the age of 25 who just need to get out and talk, who don't have people to talk to, and [people to] relate to actually in person... It's fun. You build a lot of relationships."

"...And Community Action has different groups that they do once or twice a month to help parents... And they also do events like family fun nights."

BARRIERS TO UTILIZING RESOURCES

Participants discussed numerous barriers to using existing resources. They mentioned having **negative experiences in the past with certain programs**, especially if they felt mistreated or judged by the program staff. **Programmatic or administrative issues** such as long wait times, inconsistency in procedures between offices, and having a complicated application process were also mentioned as barriers to using resources.

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH STAFF

"I don't know if it's just because they have so many people going through that they're very textbook, but they always seem rude, and it takes forever."

"The guy was really not understanding... I think attitudes like that are what prevent people from trying to use the programs when they really need them."

"I'm like 'I have class from 9 to 2:15. I can't miss class.' That was part of the requirements. I had to be doing one or the other. So they don't really understand I'm also working on campus too, so he was just kind of being rude about it."

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

"I kind of wish I didn't apply for it.. So it's like when I needed it the most, I couldn't get it, and now I'm semi-okay. And it's just a hassle overall."

"And depending on which worker you see, like at DCF, they'll tell you one thing, and it's supposed to be by policy. You go to a different worker the next time you're there, whole completely different attitude. Different little things."

BARRIERS TO UTILIZING RESOURCES

Perceived stigma or embarrassment about using resources emerged as a barrier during discussions. Participants talked about feeling embarrassed to use certain programs or knew others who were embarrassed. There was a common concern about **being judged by others** and **being deemed as unprepared or unfit for motherhood**. Thus, there was a desire to want to **demonstrate independence**, which kept some participants from seeking help.

EMBARRASSMENT

"I feel like [you] might be embarrassed because it's hard, being someone who is young and pregnant. I feel like some people just don't want other people to find out [they're using resources]."

"I don't want to say it's really embarrassing, because if you need the help, get the help. But some people just don't like what other people want to say about it, because you know everybody has to be judgmental about some things."

STIGMA

"Well, not being able to provide for what you've brought into the world kind of is not the best feeling, so having to go out there [to get help] is not something you want to do."

"I was afraid that it would make me seem weak or like I couldn't parent correctly if I had to ask for help... But I was afraid to reach out first because I thought maybe it would make me look like I couldn't parent my kids correctly."

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RURAL REGIONS

Although most themes discussed were similar across regions, some considerations for rural regions appeared to be availability of different program options. While rural participants were generally familiar with more ubiquitous federal assistance programs like WIC and KanCare, some mentioned a desire for more program options for young families within their local communities.

Transportation issues and lack of resources within driving distance were access barriers that were more pronounced for rural participants. Some participants discussed having to drive long distances for certain services such as comprehensive medical care. The long distances to services introduced challenges such as **needing extra money for gas** and **waking up in the early morning to be on time for appointments**.

“There really [aren’t many] resources or help for anyone outside of family... If you didn’t have insurance we went through Hutchinson [County] even though I wasn’t in their district. Like with my daughter, I live in Halstead which is in Harvey County and I had to go to Wichita.”

“Where I live there are no city buses. I live in Butler County... so that could be a problem. Some people don’t even have internet... They’ll either ask for a ride from a family member or friend, or Uber or something.”

“Getting up at 6am to take them to an appointment because it’s like a two hour drive... You kind of have to do everything in one day. Doctor’s appointments, dentist appointments, and what not... It’s a little bit of a struggle.”

“It’s a little bit of a challenge because sometimes we don’t have the gas or we only have the gas for one trip...”

STRESS & SOCIAL SUPPORT

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Participants discussed having various forms of social support, provided either by **family members, friends or other adults in their lives**. Many participants reported having people who can listen while they express themselves (67%) and many receive advice from people they trust about things such as pregnancy, parenting or relationships (63%). While family and friends assist with childcare, most childcare was provided by the participants themselves (41%) or they split childcare responsibilities equally with their partners (39%).

FEELINGS ABOUT SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM OTHERS

67%

feel that that often or always **know people who can listen** while they express their beliefs or feelings.

63%

feel that that often or always get **advice from someone they trust** about things such as pregnancy, parenting or relationships.

54%

feel that that often or always get **help from someone** with things they have to do, such as errands, households tasks, or childcare.

WHO TAKES CARE OF YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

I do	41%
Both myself and my partner equally	39%
A relative, friend, nanny or caregiver outside of my home	30%
A relative, friend, nanny or caregiver in my home	17%
Child care center	13%
Kindergarten or school	9%

SUPPORT FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Family was described as a critical source of support for participants, especially with **childcare and housing**. Numerous participants discussed **not being able to afford daycare or did not trust leaving their child with strangers**, and thus valued the childcare support provided by family. Participants who didn't have a close relationship with their family discussed feeling supported in similar ways by close friends.

SUPPORT FROM FAMILY

"I just try to find family or somebody familiar to her to where [my baby] doesn't feel uncomfortable, and I don't have to worry [about] my baby being mistreated. Like she goes to her grandma....so it's like I know she'll be okay there. But if not, then it's cousins that I know she'll be around, godmothers, or her dad's family."

"I don't trust people... So if he's not at my aunt's house, he's at his grandparents, his godparents... And throughout the week, if I can't pick him up on time, my sister will go and get him or my mom will go and get him."

"So my sister was the only person there really that I could turn to. Other than that, I don't know where I would be, honestly. So I really am grateful for her, honestly. She does a lot for me, and she does a lot for this baby too."

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

"I live with my best friend. She's really cool. Her family is basically my family now, because my family just wasn't there for me like they are. And so with them helping me and everything, I just feel like they're more family than my own... they help not only me but my daughter. They took not just me but both of us in when I was struggling the most."

"My best friend's mom. I feel like she definitely is like the rock in the situation because if I need something, she's there to help me, either with advice, financial, anything that I need [with], like she said. I feel like she's definitely the most help."

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

In terms of emotional support, participants valued having someone to talk to **who could relate to their experience, who was understanding, and that listened without judgment.** Having those types of conversations were perceived as important in helping to manage their stress. Participants also emphasized the **desire to feel supported through positive and empowering messages from others.** Some expressed challenges in receiving that type of support from family, who sometimes attempted to provide support in a negative, judgmental way.

SIMILAR EXPERIENCE

"I feel like she was able to relate to me, in a way, because she has four different baby daddies, and she had four kids by the time she was my age."

NON-JUDGMENT

"I'm going through this mentoring program... When I first got paired with her as a mentor, I thought she was going to judge me. But she told me 'You should never judge a book by its cover, and you should never judge a woman who is pregnant.'"

"Because they're understanding and not judgy, because sometimes if you talk to someone, they might say something judgy or be like, 'Well, why didn't you do this?'... just having that ear that you can vent to is nice."

EMPOWERING & SUPPORTIVE

"So I guess what I got from her was more like she was happy for me. She did believe in me. She wanted me to be successful, and I guess that energy from somebody means more than physically giving me something. So that was the biggest thing from them. Just they were there to listen when I was emotional, when I was stressed."

"Family can also be toxic. So sometimes you have to distance yourself from them and not let them know everything you're doing because they're constantly negative, and they're constantly putting you down or constantly ruining things for you."

CAUSES OF STRESS

Participants reported significant stressors in their lives, including stress related to their **living situation, finances, and balancing parenting with other responsibilities such as work or school**. While some stressors like finances were common to participants of all ages, certain stressors had more of an impact with some age groups over others. For example, teen parents, many of whom relied on their parents for financial and housing support, discussed more stress related to **family relationships**. Older participants expressed greater stress related to **co-parenting** and **partner relationships**.



LIVING SITUATION:

"Yes, with my mom and my brother and little sister. Mind you, I have a two-bedroom, and it's three of them, and there's two of us in this small place. So that stresses me out."



CO-PARENTING:

"I struggle a lot with my baby's daddy. I basically have to tell him to do everything. I'm basically a single mom. He picks and choose when he wants to be in our lives."



FINANCES:

"Making ends meet. I feel like a single parent, so in order to get it all done and make sure it can get done is a lot. It's overwhelming. Even if I know I can do it, still, my head's like, 'Oh, my gosh. I'm going to have a mental breakdown.'"



BALANCING RESPONSIBILITIES:

"It's hard trying to maintain a job, go to school at the same time, take care of your kids. It's hard. You just have to stay on task, and I find myself getting really distracted."

DESIRED RESOURCES THAT ADDRESS STRESSORS

There was an expressed need and desire for resources that addressed participants' major stressors. Participants desired wanting mental health-related resources, such as information on stress management and opportunities to connect with other young moms for emotional support. They also discussed a need for ways to deal with challenging relationships and ways to manage their finances.

- **Stress management techniques.** Many participants felt it was important to manage stress, especially during critical periods of their pregnancy or post-pregnancy.
- **Opportunities to connect with other young moms in-person.** While some participants engaged in online communities with other mothers, they mentioned desiring more in-person opportunities to connect with young moms.
- **Relationship/co-parenting classes.** Participants also discussed wanting more resources on how to balance co-parenting responsibilities with the partners/father of their children.
- **Financial literacy.** Information on how to manage finances, especially how to avoid and deal with debt, was strongly desired.

"What I would like to see is ways to cope [with] stress. Are there any techniques?"

"It's hard because I struggled to find moms who actually get together, I wish I could find a specific group in Wichita that is specifically my age group...that need company, to not be so alone all the time."

"I think there might need to be programs for like stuff like step-parent-wise. I think that will help out in a big way. But I think it needs to involve both parents."

"Financial pressure and debt, trying to get caught up on old debt. I really wish in school they would've taught us more about debt and credit and things like that."

PRE-EXISTING AD TESTING

PRE-EXISTING AD TESTING

During the pre-existing ad testing portion of the focus groups and interviews, **a total of 6 pre-existing ads were tested: 3 print ads and 3 video ads.** This activity was designed to investigate receptivity to messaging within each ad, as well as evaluate style, tone, and message framing to inform the development of creative materials and recommendations for messaging approaches.

The moderator led a semi-structured discussion to determine features of the ads that were liked and disliked, and to identify attributes that were relatable and attention-grabbing. Participants also discussed who they perceived as the target audience for each ad. In addition to qualitative discussions, participants completed an Ad Test Survey to measure the degree to which the information in the ad was perceived as informative, meaningful, attention-grabbing, and trustworthy.

LYFTE PRINTED ADS



PRE-EXISTING VIDEO ADS




LYFTE AD, STRUGGLE OF YOUNG PARENTS

Participants provided feedback on the printed ad below that featured colorful text and several pictures of parents with their babies. Participants found the **general ad design to be appealing and targeted for parents**. Some words like “**struggle**”, however, were perceived as negative and judgmental.

ARE YOU A YOUNG PARENT?

We know it can be a **struggle** to complete your education, **take care** of your new baby, and **achieve your dreams**.


WE CAN HELP!



WE CAN HELP YOU

- with needs for you and your baby, like housing and food
- find a doctor and get prenatal care
- graduate or get your GED
- help you start college or trade school
- connect you with health insurance providers

Call us today or **connect with us** on Facebook, and earn prizes for participation!

LYFTE  **Lifting Young Families Towards Excellence**

Kansas Department of Health and Senior Services

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER OF SOUTHEAST KANSAS

Pittsburg 3011 North Michigan 620.243.5625

Colleyville 801 West 9th Street 620.251.4300

Columbus & Baxter Springs 120 West Pine 620.429.2101

Parsons 21010 Commerce Drive 620.777.8400

Facebook.com/lyfte Website: www.lyfte.org

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Participants felt that inclusive photographs conveyed a positive and inviting tone. Specifically, they liked photographs of fathers and children, and found this to be a refreshing change from many ads they generally see. To make the ad more relatable, participants suggested including photos of younger people that looked closer to them in age.
- 2 Participants were attracted to bright colors and felt the font style was kid-friendly, which conveyed a playfulness they thought was appropriate for the topic. As parents, kid-friendly designs were considered light-hearted and eye-catching.
- 3 There were strong reactions to the word “struggle” which participants felt conveyed a judgmental tone and reinforced stereotypes. To participants, the word “struggle” within the context of the ad suggested that all young parents are struggling because they can’t take care of their children, which led to detachment from the message.
- 4 There were mixed reactions to the phrase “earn prizes for participation”, which confused some participants. To them it was not clear how prizes fit within the context of providing services, and they felt that it should be clear whether they would receive practical items for their children.

LYFTE AD, STRUGGLE OF YOUNG PARENTS

Compared to the other printed ads, more participants agreed that this ad was informative (94%), meaningful (70%), attention-grabbing (87%), and that they trusted the information provided (74%). Overall, there were numerous elements that were liked in this ad and that were appealing.

"THIS AD IS INFORMATIVE"	"THIS AD IS MEANINGFUL"	"THIS AD GRABBED MY ATTENTION"	"I TRUST THE INFORMATION IN THIS AD"
94%	70%	87%	74%
<i>"I like this one because it's not only like targeted for just young moms. It shows there's young dads too."</i>	<i>"It's colorful. It's more inviting. When you have kids, you're used to color, so you want colorful things. That's what grabs your attention."</i>	<i>"They try to bold certain words, like struggle. To me, that kind of irritated me... They're assuming because I'm a young mom, I'm struggling."</i>	<i>"But then it's like just because we're young, some people that are young parents, some of them aren't struggling. So then it's like putting us into a category, like all young parents are struggling, need help."</i>

LYFTE AD, EDUCATIONAL GOALS & CAREER

The printed ad below focused on helping young parents reach their educational goals and achievements, and included photos of young dads with their children and a young mom graduating. Overall, this ad was perceived to have an **empowering message in a positive tone**. Participants liked that the ad was **focused on goals and a hopeful future**, as opposed to a focus on the struggles of a young parent.



KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Participants connected with specific words used throughout the ad, including words such as ‘achieve’, ‘enjoy’ and the phrase “Create the story you want...”. They perceived this language as empowering and that it prompted them to focus on their future. Some also liked the questions, “Where do you want to go? What do you want to do? Who do you want to be” because they were thought provoking.
- 2 Participants found the selection of photos to be attention-grabbing. Showing young dads was positive and conveyed a sense of inclusivity in which both young moms and dads were part of the message.
- 3 Participants who had education goals, particularly younger participants, felt that the ad was targeted for them and relatable. Although most participants related to the ad’s focus on achieving educational goals, some who had already graduated or were not currently planning on going to school did not find it relevant.
- 4 Participants felt that the ad was not informative because it did not include specific information about how the program would help young parents achieve their goals, in other words, what services were available.

LYFTE AD, EDUCATIONAL GOALS & CAREER

Overall, participants connected with the positive, empowering message of this ad and they liked that it was focused on a specific theme. Numerous participants agreed that this ad was informative (70%), meaningful (59%), grabbed their attention (70%), and that they trusted the information in this ad (58%).

"THIS AD IS INFORMATIVE"	"THIS AD IS MEANINGFUL"	"THIS AD GRABBED MY ATTENTION"	"I TRUST THE INFORMATION IN THIS AD"
70%	59%	70%	58%

"I like it because it's asking what you want to do. The last one was like what you need to do. You need to get this and that. This is more like 'Where do you want to go? What do you want to do? It's up to you.'"

"I like the wording... Achieve your dreams, enjoy your family. Like small goals like that. Like 'Oh what is your goal?' Finishing high school. Not this whole thing of 'I know it's hard and struggling to...'"

"I also kind of like how it has dads instead of just moms. Because I feel like it's a neutral thing."

"I feel like it wasn't that informative. It gave you an idea of what they're going for, but it didn't really tell you what they actually do to get you there."

LYFTE AD, COMMUNICATING LYFTE SERVICES

The ad below featured a large question mark with photos of young parents, and listed a range of services offered. Participants felt that the ad **clearly communicated the services**, but many felt it was overwhelming. Participants also disliked the phrase “**we can help you**”, and some expressed confusion about the large question mark.



KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Participants perceived the ad to be informative because the services offered were listed out clearly. There were many, however, who felt that the ad outlined too many different types of services, which was overwhelming and gave the impression that enrolling in the program would be a very involved, lengthy process. This was mentioned as something that would deter them from contacting the program.
- 2 Participants offered suggestions to make the ad more attention-grabbing. Some disliked that the focal point of the ad was the large question mark, which they felt did not clearly connect with the main message. They liked seeing photos of parents with babies but noted that the photos were too small and hard to see. Additionally, while participants generally liked the use of the color scheme, they found the green background to be too abrasive as the primary color choice.
- 3 There were some negative reactions to the phrase “we can help you,” and participants felt that it conveyed a negative, judgmental message that as young parents, they needed to contact this program because they need help and can’t provide for themselves. Some also disliked the use of the phrase ‘earn prizes for participation’, which they felt was unrelated and confusing.

LYFTE AD, COMMUNICATING LYFTE SERVICES

Overall, many participants felt the ad was too broad and conveyed a negative message. Numerous participants, however, agreed that this ad was informative (72%), grabbed their attention (69%), and approximately half trusted the information in this ad (52%). Less than half of participants agreed that this ad was meaningful (48%).

"THIS AD IS INFORMATIVE"	"THIS AD IS MEANINGFUL"	"THIS AD GRABBED MY ATTENTION"	"I TRUST THE INFORMATION IN THIS AD"
72%	48%	69%	52%

"It's informative, but it doesn't really grab your attention... So if I was just walking by it, I probably wouldn't read it and even know what it said."

"It's like, am I looking for help or am I looking for a prize. I feel like that doesn't mix well."




"I feel like it makes it sound like we're completely helpless."

"I'm thinking that I am in for it, that this is going to be a long process, not something easy and simple that I have the patience for... Yeah, I'm sure I could get all that stuff, but it's not simple."

"...but the pictures are tiny. So depending on how big you print it out, you can probably not really going to be able to see the pictures very well."




PRE-EXISTING AD TESTING

In addition to the three printed ads, participants viewed three pre-existing video ads. These ads were tested to evaluate targeted messaging approaches, and also to identify features that were appealing to young moms.

PRE-EXISTING AD	DESCRIPTION	QUALITATIVE THEMES
	<p>Country Tobacco-Free</p> <p><i>This targeted ad features a young Country male who, in response to losing his father to mouth cancer, vows to leave a legacy of living tobacco-free.</i></p>	<p>While participants did not necessarily connect with the ad’s story of tobacco use, they liked that the anti-tobacco message was very clear and felt it would be compelling for those who identify with the Country lifestyle or have lost a loved one to cancer. Many participants also recognized that the ad was targeted to Country individuals, and felt that a targeted approach would connect with that specific audience.</p>
	<p>WIC Program</p> <p><i>The focus of this ad is to inform viewers about the WIC program and ways that WIC supports low-income families.</i></p>	<p>Participants liked that this ad was very informative, providing specific information about the services offered. They felt that the services were appealing and relevant to them. Some mentioned they would have liked the ad more if it had more upbeat music and featured real scenarios with young families. For example, showing kids playing or a young mother feeding her baby would make the ad more relatable than simply words.</p>
	<p>Teen Mom Interview</p> <p><i>A teen mom describes the challenges of being a mom in high school, particularly how the physical symptoms of pregnancy impacted her as a student.</i></p>	<p>Participants did not like this ad’s focus on a negative experience as a teen mom and felt that she was exaggerating the negative aspects of going to school. They wanted a more realistic message that focused on other aspects of pregnancy as a teen, like missing experiences with friends. Some participants did like that the message was specifically focused on being a teen mom because it made them feel like they had a voice to relate to.</p>

PRE-EXISTING AD TESTING

In addition to the three printed ads, participants viewed three pre-existing video ads. These ads were tested to evaluate targeted messaging approaches, and also to identify features that are appealing to different audiences.

PRE-EXISTING AD	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPANT QUOTES
	<p>Country Tobacco-Free</p> <p><i>This targeted ad features a young Country male who, in response to losing his father to mouth cancer, vows to leave a legacy of living tobacco-free.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The camo, the shooting, the dirt, the truck. Just it fits people that chew very well, because there is kind of a... Like people that chew kind of are mostly like that, honestly.”• “They’re country. They’re hee-haw...there’s [also] regular people that do dip, and it was kind of like towards country people...”• “Most people, when they think of chewing tobacco, they be like ‘Oh, country people,’.... Like she was saying...”
	<p>WIC Program</p> <p><i>The focus of this ad is to inform viewers about the WIC program and ways that WIC supports low-income families.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Just more upbeat. It’s like hey, this is something good. This is what we provide. This is how you can... We have tips on breastfeeding. We have ways to help you with your nutrition.”• “It’s eye-catching for someone who is a mom or pregnant, just because that’s the natural thing to want for your kid.”• “It could have had like kids playing in the background or like a mother feeding a baby.”
	<p>Teen Mom Interview</p> <p><i>A teen mom describes the challenges of being a mom in high school, particularly how the physical symptoms of pregnancy impacted her as a student.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “From personal experience, I was...almost 41 weeks pregnant, going to school, doing all this. It is hard, and it sucks, but it’s not all bad... I feel like she maybe exaggerated.”• “Maybe if she was talking about not being able to do things that my friends can do, or not being able to participate... I think that might have helped. But her being in pain, it doesn’t correlate with anything [about] being 17.”• “So relatable.”

INSIGHTS

INSIGHT #1

YOUNG MOMS FEEL A STRONG NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SELF-RELIANCE AND INDEPENDENCE

As participants spoke about their experiences as young moms, the need to show others they were **self-reliant and independent** was strongly conveyed. Participants compared their experience to ones of older parents, with one participant stating that, *“When you’re a young mom... that also comes with criticism...I feel like older parents, they just get nothing but support.”* This caused some young moms to feel a heightened sense of **wanting to prove** that they **could be providers for their children and independent**. This theme emerged when discussing challenging relationships with family members, barriers to utilizing resources, and when talking about co-parenting situations and responsibilities.

Given that independence is strongly valued by young moms, this highlights the need to ensure that independence is leveraged in messaging and framing of the services offered by programs.

SOCIAL MEDIA SERVES AS A PLATFORM TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS, BUT ALSO AS A TOOL FOR INFORMATION SEEKING

Social media platforms, specifically **Facebook**, were used as a way to connect with others. Although these trends are less pronounced with youth generally, young moms indicated that Facebook allowed them to update and remain in contact with distant family members. Many spoke about using it as a medium to share pictures of their children and to **connect with the local community**. Some talked about using Facebook Marketplace to buy and sell baby/children's products, joining Facebook groups to **learn information** about parenting, and to find out about **local events**. A mom said she liked mom groups because, *"it's nice input from people who have been moms."*

Social media offered many young moms a reprieve from their responsibilities, and social connections were especially valued. These insights assist with understanding the appeal of specific social platforms, but also reveal effective avenues for promoting local programs.

YOUNG MOMS WANT RESOURCES, AND FEEL THAT NUMEROUS ARE AVAILABLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Across interviews and focus groups, young mothers indicated that **they want and need resources** to help them through pregnancy and parenthood. Most indicated that numerous **resources and services were available in their communities**, and many revealed they did not feel that a lack of services was an issue. This was most communicated by younger moms, who suggested that many programs catered to teen parents. A young mom in Wichita said, “*I tend to search ‘young parents in need’...and I’ve just seen a lot*”. Aside from online, participants expressed that they **commonly learn about resources** through others people, including parents, friends, doctors, or teachers.

These findings suggest that young moms are open to receiving services and resources. Although some rural participants indicated they sometimes felt there were less programs available, availability was not generally perceived as a barrier to participating in programs offered in local communities.

INSIGHT #4

YOUNG MOMS FACE A MULTITUDE OF STRESSORS THAT GUIDE THE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES THEY WANT

As participants spoke about the various stressors they face as young mothers, various themes emerged. All participants indicated challenges with managing **financial responsibilities** and desired to learn how to manage debt and budgets. One young mom in Topeka expressed, “*I really wish in school they would’ve taught us more about debt and credit and things like that.*” Many also spoke about wanting to learn how to **manage communication**. Numerous participants indicated that they currently live with family members due to financial constraints, and commonly spoke about **strained relationships with parents**. Older youth also expressed challenges with **co-parenting situations**, revealing that navigating those circumstances induced a great deal of stress.

As young moms spoke about these themes, they expressed a desire for more resources and guidance that would help address these specific stressors in their lives.

BARRIERS TO UTILIZING SERVICES INCLUDE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH PROGRAMS AND EMBARRASSMENT

Although young moms felt that programs were useful, many spoke about **negative experiences with program staff** that colored their perceptions. Young moms spoke about having a common experience where staff had been rude when rendering program services. One participant suggested, *“I think attitudes [from staff] are what prevent people from trying to use the programs when they really need them.”* In addition to interactions with staff, young moms expressed that **embarrassment** could prevent enrollment in programs. They noted that it made them feel **sensitive to judgments** from others, who may believe that since they are using services they are unable to provide for their children.

These barriers serve to elucidate the impact that negative experiences can have on enrollment, and may be useful for program feedback. Additionally, ensuring that words of empowerment and positive framing are highlighted in messaging can serve to combat feelings of embarrassment.

YOUNG MOMS SEEK RESOURCES THAT ARE CONVENIENT, PRACTICAL, AND THAT CONNECT THEM WITH OTHERS

As participants spoke about the types of resources they sought, many emphasized convenience. Young moms felt strained in managing their responsibilities, and **strongly valued short wait times and easy, clear instructions during the application process**. Additionally, young moms valued **practical items** for their children, such as formula and diapers, and felt these were beneficial. One young mom in Wichita talked about her experience with WIC, stating that, *“They’re really helpful with your health and stuff...They give you things to make healthy foods and stuff. And they also give you free formula, so I think WIC is pretty cool.”* Lastly, programs that **connected young parents** or that promoted events were especially liked, and numerous indicated they enjoyed the social connectivity with others who were in similar situations.

This information can help elucidate ways to position program offerings in local communities, and assist with guiding program efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1

CREATIVE MATERIALS SHOULD BE TARGETED AND FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Participants expressed that listing numerous distinct services on one printed ad was **overwhelming** and disjointed. This led many to believe that signing up for services would require numerous points of contact and that it would be a drawn out process, which **conflicted with their desire for convenience**. Some participants also expressed skepticism that one program would provide assistance with such a diverse range of services, which led them to **disregard the message**. Participants also felt that a targeted message that communicated that programs were intended for young parents increased its relatability.

During the development of creative materials, ensure that messaging about services and resources provided are focused on themes, such as education, healthy relationships, etc. Additionally, if photographs are included in creative elements, ensure that individuals featured are younger in age to be inclusive of teens.

RECOMMENDATION #2

CREATIVE MATERIALS SHOULD AVOID LANGUAGE THAT MAY COMMUNICATE A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Numerous participants expressed that words like **‘struggle’** and phrases like **‘we can help you’** conveyed a condescending message that as young parents, they are unable to provide for their children without help and support. Although some expressed that it wasn’t bothersome, this sentiment instigated a desire in other moms to demonstrate that they did not need help from those services. Some participants felt that language that inadvertently conveys this message would have the **unintended consequences of deterring program engagement** and utilization.

During the development of creative materials, ensure that language does not highlight that young parents are in need or that they are struggling. Additional research of newly developed creative materials would be ideal to ensure that language used does not communicate this type of message with the target audience.

RECOMMENDATION #3

CREATIVE MATERIALS SHOULD CONVEY AN EMPOWERING MESSAGE IN A POSITIVE TONE

Participants expressed strong receptivity to creative materials that were **conveyed in a positive tone**. To young moms, this was communicated through word choices that emphasized achievement of dreams and that gave them a **sense of empowerment**, such as words like ‘*create*’, ‘*goals*’, and ‘*achieve*’. Participants also felt that a positive tone was conveyed through photographs of family and children, and many commented that depicting **young fathers with children was especially appealing** because it was uncommon in traditional messaging. Young moms also liked light hearted images and a colorful palette, stating that these features were attention grabbing.

During the development of creative materials, ensure that messaging is framed from a perspective of empowerment, and that messaging is uplifting. To ensure that creative materials achieve this aim, if possible, further testing of materials is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION #4

MESSAGING SHOULD FOCUS ON TOPICS THAT ARE MOST DESIRED AND REQUESTED BY YOUNG MOMS

During focus groups and interviews, young moms revealed topics and programs they found appealing. Focusing messaging on the specific topics that touch upon young moms' needs will be important for program engagement. For one, moms highlighted a desired for facilitating and **increasing social connectivity** with other young moms in program efforts. Additionally, ensuring that **processes are clearly delineated to ensure they are not communicated as overly complex**, will be important for increasing receptivity to participation. Lastly, focusing messaging on ways that **programs can assist with primary stressors in young moms' lives**, such as managing co-parenting relationships and increasing financial literacy, will be important for increasing program engagement.

These considerations should assist with guiding program efforts, and are tailored to engage young moms in services and programs.

THANK YOU

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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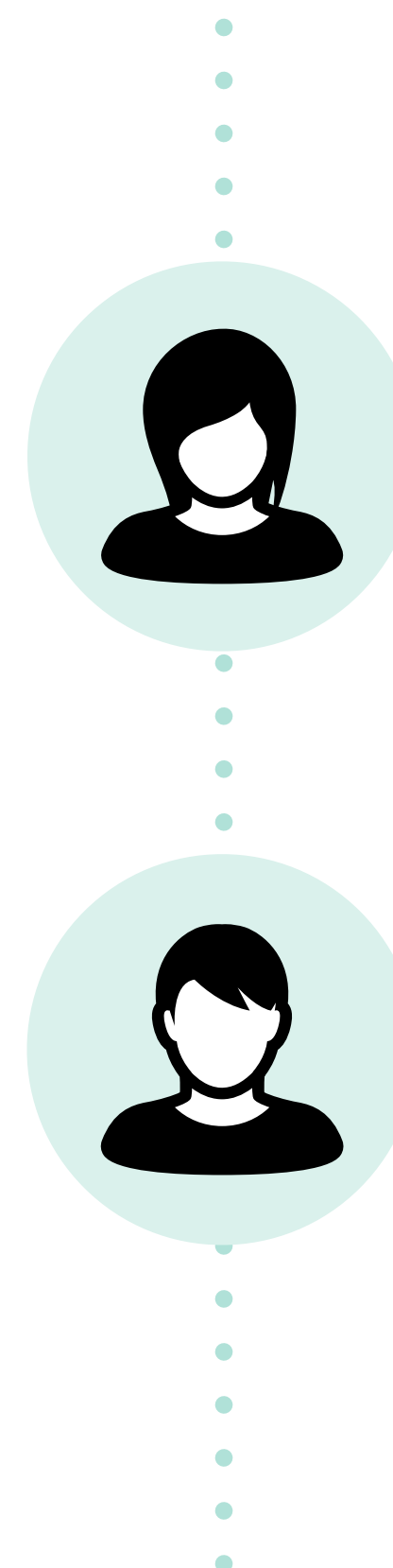
APPENDIX

FAMILY PLANNING

Quantitative data were collected regarding participants' family planning behaviors. **Roughly half of participants (51%)** reported that they use birth control **most or all of the time** and **one-quarter of participants (25%)** reported that they use birth control **some or half of the time**. **The IUD** (such as Mirena or ParaGard) and **implant** (such as Implanon or Nexplanon) were the most popular birth control methods used. Top reasons for not using birth control included a preference for the **withdrawal or “pulling out” method (44%)** and the **participant wanted a baby (28%)**.

FREQUENCY OF BIRTH CONTROL USE	
Most of the time / All of the time	51%
Some of the time / Half of the time	25%
None of the time	24%

BIRTH CONTROL METHOD	
No specific method was used	33%
An IUD or implant	24%
Withdrawal or “pulling out”	20%
Condoms	13%
A shot, patch, or birth control ring	11%
Birth Control Pills	4%
Other	4%



TOP REASONS FOR NOT USING BIRTH CONTROL	
Used the withdrawal or “pulling out” method	44%
I wanted a baby	28%
Did not like/had problems with methods	26%
Worried about side effects	24%
My partner wanted a baby	24%
It was a spontaneous unplanned event	20%
Used the calendar and menstrual cycle	17%
I was under the influence of alcohol or drugs	9%
Did not have methods available	7%
Did not want parents to find out	4%